

# THE Humane Society

OF THE UNITED STATES

## CLOSE-UP REPORT



### EVERY FUR COAT HURTS!

"The raccoon did not run away as we slogged downstream toward it. Running was not an option. One of its feet was held tightly in a No. 2 steel trap.

"The trapper I was with paused momentarily appraising the animal for size and quality of fur. 'Look at those ears,' he said. 'That old fellow has been in plenty of fights.'

"Then, with a carpenter's hammer that is standard equipment on his trapline, he aimed a blow at the raccoon's head intended to fulfill the trapper's promise of a quick and humane death for animals caught in leghold traps.

"When the trapper opened the jaws of the trap, the raccoon, frothing blood, attempted to crawl away. Not dead yet. With one quick motion the trapper grabbed the wounded animal by its hind legs, swung the body in a smooth arc, and crunched its skull against a log.

"That ended the raccoon's struggles. His fighting days were over, his life traded for his fur. On that day, his fur was worth \$12 to the trapper."

— Reprinted by Permission of Floridian Magazine/The St. Petersburg Times  
— Photo by John Pennington



# Whims of Fashion Fatal to Furbearers

The raccoon on the cover of this report is only one of about 17 million U.S. furbearers killed each year. Most have been made to suffer the agony of the steel jaw trap. The trapper's *coup de grace* is often administered with a club, a noose, or a boot heel. And let us not forget the millions of other fur animals which are raised and slaughtered on so-called fur ranches! All of this death and suffering in the name of fashion.

Killing fur animals for luxury products is both a moral and an ecological problem. Each and every fur coat creates a demand for more and more pelts. This intensive trapping pressure stimulates "game management" — programs that promote the propagation of economically valuable species at the expense of other living creatures in the ecosystem. These creatures are essential to the efficient operation of natural systems. And our insensitivity to the terror, pain, and suffering brought about by the use of the steel jaw trap adversely affects our relationships with all living things, including fellow human beings.

The trap is a blind instrument of death. A trapper may set out his trap to catch a furbearer. But a bird might swoop down to take the bait and be trapped. This not only disrupts the chain of life which is essential to the preservation of the balance of nature, but causes needless suffering and death to so-called "trash" animals. And if that's not bad enough, The HSUS has accumulated a litany of case reports documenting incidents in which domestic pets have been maimed and have lost their paws or legs in steel jaw traps.



**Pet animals and children often fall victim to the steel jaw trap. U.S. animal shelters are often called upon to care for and euthanize cats and dogs that have been trapped. This unfortunate dog was a victim of the "blind" trap.**

Are young children taught to be insensitive to pain and suffering when there's a trapping tradition in their homes? When they see row upon row of fur coats in the department stores?

Parents are always confronted with questions such as: "How did they kill it Daddy? Why do they do it Mommy?" The parent usually frowns and the child soon learns not to ask those kinds of questions.

Whether we like it or not, we grow up to be a great deal like our parents. Wanting a fur coat is "learned behavior." It is learned because Mother or Father had one. It is learned because advertising says we must have one. It is learned because our peers have one.

It is not learned because we need one. We don't need fur coats and other products. We have central heating. Fur coats are expensive to buy, expensive to store, and expensive to maintain. We buy them because we have "learned" they are a sign of affluence, a certificate for peer acceptance, or because we think they "look" good on us.

Nonsense! Cruel Nonsense!

**An inexpensive fur coat costs between \$2,000 and \$5,000. The more expensive coats may cost \$100,000 or more, especially the coats that are made from portions of an animal such as the stomach or muzzle.**



# How Many Skins Make a Coat?

When we look at the fur draped mannequin in the salon, do we ever ask ourselves, "How many animals had to die to make that coat?" No, we don't. The skins are from anonymous creatures who have been sewn together in a blurred montage which no longer resembles nature's original creation. Furriers even call their coats "creations."

In truth, every fur coat is made up of skins of many animals of one species — not just one animal. The average ranch-raised mink coat can contain as many as 40-50 pelts. That's 40-50 mink who were raised on the meat of previously slaughtered and skinned mink, subjected to animal husbandry methods which cause mutations, confined in tiny cages, and killed by poison, electrocution, or clubbing.

If every person that bought a ranch-raised mink coat knew the life and death

history of that coat, there's a good chance there'd be no such thing as mink coats. And the same is true of other ranch furs.

| The Number of Pelts in Average Fur Garment |       |
|--|-------|
| Species                                    | Pelts |
| Leopard                                    | 4-5   |
| Tiger                                      | 3-5   |
| Lynx                                       | 10    |
| Ocelot                                     | 12    |
| Opossum                                    | 25    |
| Raccoon                                    | 20-40 |
| Mink                                       | 36-65 |
| Lamb                                       | 22    |

# What's it Like to be Trapped?

A fox emerges from the swamp grass and moves along its usual path of travel. WHAM! The jaws of the trap slam shut on the fox's right rear leg. The startled and terrified fox struggles to break free. The smooth jaws of the trap bite into flesh causing traumatic injury to skin, ligaments, and muscle.

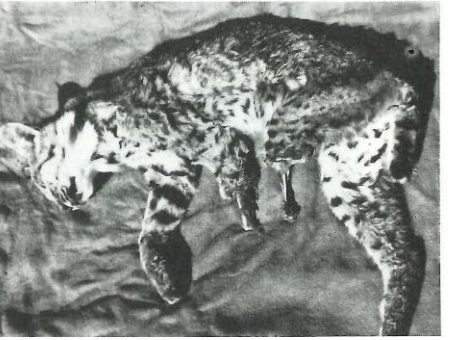
Fear and anxiety keep the tiring creature going. The fox attempts to rest but terror has overtaken it. It must escape! So, it begins to gnaw at its own flesh.

A Canadian Wildlife Service publication graphically reported: "The stomachs of (trapped) Arctic foxes...often contain parts of their own bodies. They may swallow fragments of their teeth broken off in biting the trap, and sometimes part of a mangled foot; almost every stomach contains some fox fur, and a considerable number contain pieces of skin, claws, or bits of bone..."

As the animal twists and turns, the bone can break. In this condition, the animal

chews off his foot. The terror-stricken fox limps off into the swamp grass leaving a trail of blood.

This event, commonly called "wringing off" by trappers, could have taken two hours, two days, or maybe even two weeks.



**In March of '79, animal control officers in the San Diego area were forced to euthanize this bobcat. He had escaped from a trap in which both left feet had been caught.**

# Life and Death on the Ranch

Most of our country's fur ranches are located in the Northwestern and Great Lakes states. It is believed that the colder climates of these regions produce more luxurious pelts.

One of the cruelties on these ranches can be attributed to the genetic tinkering that goes on. As they seek to develop valuable colors, the ranchers have developed strains of mink that are deaf, blind, or afflicted with a variety of neuromuscular disorders. The royal pastel mink has developed an abnormality known as "screw neck." When an afflicted mink is frightened, it turns its neck so that the underside is exposed to view. White minks from Norway known as "hedlund hvit" are known to be completely deaf.

Mink are often housed in nest boxes varying in floor size from 30 cm. x 100 cm. to 100 cm. x 200 cm. One Association of fur farm breeders claims to be able to raise 5,000 mink on one acre of ground.

Mink are usually "pelted" in their fourth year. Some may be kept alive as long as six years if they prove to be good for breeding purposes.

They are killed by a variety of methods which are described later in this report. The goal of all methods of killing is to cause death without damaging the pelt.

Strange as it may seem there are no laws

to protect ranch-raised fur animals from an inhumane death. Our fur animals are simply at the mercy of their owners.

# Outlawing the Trap: An Uphill Battle

More than 19 other nations outlaw the steel jaw trap. To date, no federal legislation has been successful. Trapping is established as a "states' rights" issue.

There has been some moderate success reforming trapping laws on the state level but very little success in banning the trap. Only five states substantially limit the trap: Massachusetts, North Carolina, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Florida. Each of these five has built in some provision for the use of the trap with permits for special purposes such as animal damage control.

Within the past decade, more than 300 bills on trapping reform have been introduced before approximately thirty state legislatures. These bills are often referred to committees dealing with agriculture and natural resources. Such committees are often dominated by rural legislators who regard animal trapping as economically important to their constituency.

# Economics of the U.S. Fur Trade

The HSUS estimates that there are about 300,000 trappers in the United States, the vast majority of whom do not derive a substantial portion of their income from trapping. HSUS estimates that the typical skilled part-time trapper earns between \$400 and \$1,000 a year.

Prices paid to trappers in 1978 for pelts ranged from \$17 for a raccoon to \$275 for a lynx.

The principal species raised in captivity in the U.S. are rabbit, mink, fox, and chinchilla. Mink is by far the most popular species raised on ranches expressly for fur. In 1976, more than three million pelts were raised on the 1,100 mink farms in the U.S.

The export of furs and fur products brought about 300 million dollars into the U.S. in 1977. In the same year we spent about 172 million dollars importing furs. The total retail sales of all fur garments in 1978 brought 725 million dollars into the coffers of the fur industry, an industry that employs fewer than 5,000 people in about 663 firms.

As you see the real profits are being made by the furriers and the fur designers. Their names read like an honor roll of the fashion world:

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Yves St. Laurent       | Charlotte Ford |
| Givenchy               | Donald Brooks  |
| Dior (Laurence Kaye)   | Kasper         |
| Bill Blass             | Ann Klein      |
| Calvin Klein           | Perry Ellis    |
| Oscar de la Renta      | Karl Lagerfeld |
| Geoffrey Beene         | Ungaro         |
| Halston                | Ralph Lauren   |
| Giorgio Sant 'Angelo   | Norell         |
| Pierre Balmain         | John Anthony   |
| Dianne Von Furstenberg |                |

They are supporting the cruelties of the trap and the ranch by designing and creating demand for fur products. Their major allies are people between the ages of 25-34 and 45-64. Together, these two groups are responsible for 83% of all fur sales in the U.S.

Who's responsible for the deaths of millions of furbearing animals? Is it the buyer? The trapper? The rancher? The furrier? The answer, like the answer to all difficult problems, probably lies on the shoulders of all parties to the fur business. However, without buyers there would be little or no cruelty. The trouble is that most buyers don't know the massive amount of pain and suffering they are indirectly supporting.



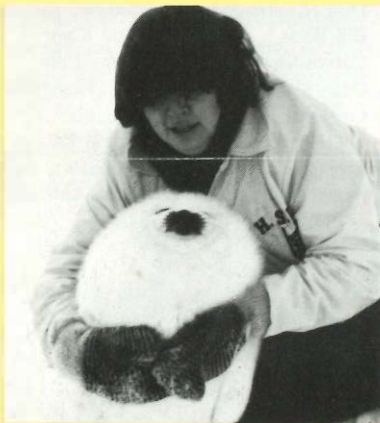
## Seals: The Cruel Clubbing Continues

On the ice floes off Canada's Newfoundland, and the rocky shores of the U.S. Pribilof Islands and South Africa, fur seals are clubbed to death every year. These annual carnages have caught the attention of the world...a world that has howled in protest — to no avail.

In Alaska and South Africa, young adult seals are harassed and rounded up. Then, clubbers wade into the pack and begin their deadly chore. On Newfoundland's ice they kill baby seals because their white protective fur is prized. The young must be slaughtered before the fur changes color.

The clubs may look like baseball bats, some with iron spikes. The scenes are ghastly. Clubbed animals are skinned with such speed that many carcasses are still quivering after death. Clubbers claim their method of death is *humane*. The HSUS believes it to be brutalizing to both animals and people.

Perhaps the labels on the sealskin coats should say, "Clubbed to Death in...." Then maybe the buyers would think twice before supporting the slaughter.



**HSUS Director of Wildlife Protection, Sue Pressman, holds one of the baby white seals during her investigation of the Newfoundland hunt.**

## You Can Do Something to Save Furbearers

✓ **Buy an ad** in your local paper using the camera-ready ad pictured below. Check costs and availability of space with your paper first. It is possible your paper may have a policy against running such ads.

**Here's the part of a fur coat most people never see.**

It's not a pretty sight. Because when the steel jaw trap is triggered, the heavy steel jaws snap shut with such force that efforts to escape tear the flesh and muscle. Crush the bone. And all animals with such intense pain and terror, many chew off their paws trying to escape. And, because many trappers fail to check their traps regularly, animals go through agony for days, often succumbing to starvation, freezing or predators before the trapper reaches them.

The steel jaw trap has been banned in 19 other nations. But not in the U.S. In fact, American fur trappers still use it to capture the majority of 17,000,000 U.S. animals trapped for fur every year.

Working to see the steel jaw trap abolished throughout the U.S. is the main objective of our fight to save fur animals from unnecessary cruelty. Through loud and clear protests, publicity, the gathering of documentation and through lobbying in Congress and other legislative activity, we can achieve the strong, unified voice it will take to see this reform through. But we'll need your help.

If you oppose this cruelty to our fur animals for profit — for the sake of vanity — support the Humane Society of the United States. And let us be your voice.

**Stop the Cruelty of Trapping.**

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$100.00 ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

In support of The Humane Society of the United States and their efforts to save fur animals from such unnecessary cruelty.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

**The Humane Society of the United States**

2100 L Street, N.W., Dept. 3, Washington, D.C. 20037

**Write: HSUS Trapping Ad**

✓ **Use the coupons** included with this report to let your charge plate stores know you don't like their selling furs. Attach the handy coupons to your checks when paying bills.

✓ **Sign and return the Pledge Card** which is your declaration against the killing of furbearers for fashion. It is included on the same insert card with the check coupons mentioned above.

✓ **Support HSUS programs** to eliminate the needless slaughter of furbearers through your tax-deductible contribution. Use the enclosed envelope to send your check today.

✓ **Ask your state legislator** to contact HSUS for a copy of our "Suggested State Bill on Trapping." Urge them to submit and support the passage of a strong anti-trapping bill.

**Write: HSUS Model Trapping Law**

✓ **Use the information** contained in this report to write letters to the editor of your local papers. HSUS would appreciate receiving copies of your letters or clippings of the printed letters.

✓ **Dissuade your friends** who may be planning to buy a fur product. Let them read this report. Or, send us their name and we'll send them a copy of the report. **Write: HSUS Fur Report**

## Help HSUS Help Furbearers!

Your contribution of \$10, \$25, or more will help us work toward the end of the pain and suffering...

Your contribution will enable The HSUS to continue its fight against cruelty to animals whenever and wherever we find it.

All contributors of \$10 or more will receive HSUS's *EVERY FUR COAT HURTS* decal. By displaying the glue-on-back decal, you will help HSUS spread the word to those who have not thought about the behind-the-scenes cruelty which is an essential part of every fur product.

Made of weather-resistant material, the decal can be affixed to your car window,



your briefcase, a book cover, or the back of your jogging suit!

Use the postage-paid envelope to send your tax deductible contribution today.

*It's not enough to say you like animals!*



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